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LATE—BUT WORTH IT

Yes, not until just before Christmas will you receive your calendars, so please don't bombard us with beefs (We've already received some). But the calendars will be worth waiting for. Your editor can attest to this since he has read proof from the original copy through the finished product which went to the printer, not until this issue of WRL NEWS, we're sorry to say.

The finished product is, really, an excellent and readable account of "Fifty Years of Resistance" illustrated with photos of the peace struggle and of those who participated in it. We owe Marty Jezer, the calendar's editor, a vote of thanks for a topflight job.

If you haven't yet placed your order, there still is time: $2.50 apiece, $11 for five—postpaid.

AN ANTI-CORPORATE COMPLICITY PROGRAM FOR WRL?

by Brad Lyttle

In recent years, peace organizations have become increasingly involved in what are called "anti-corporate complicity" (ACC) projects and programs. These activities seek to expose the relationship which large-scale corporate capitalism has with the military and aggressive American foreign policy, and by a variety of means seek to expose that complicity, hopefully to the point where corporations will cancel their military contracts.

A LOCAL DEMO WITH THIS EMPHASIS . . .

. . . was the October 28 March Against Death conducted by the WRL's Jersey Shore chapter over five miles of Monmouth County.

"Our objective was to expose to residents the role of their county by demonstrating the complicity of corporations with local plants there," said Larry Erickson, the group's spokesman. "Our leaflets named the top 10 war contractors in the county and pointed out that over $22 million in war contracts had been awarded to Monmouth County firms in fiscal '72."

Perhaps the best known ACC project is the one aimed at Minneapolis-Honeywell, a firm that manufactures components for missiles and bomber guid-

(Continued on page 2)

A "FAST OF LIFE" IN SAN ANTONIO

On October 15, eight San Antonians including Tom Flower, southwest WRL field representative and Gary Ace, an airman then stationed at Kelly Air Force Base but on October 31, discharged according to schedule, started a "Fast of Life." This photo, taken in front of Guadalupe Church where the fast started and where the fasters came together each day at 6 p.m., shows (left to right) Mary Emeny, Rod Radle, Tom Flower, Gary Ace, Richard Chase and Trey Ellison. (Corelee Moore is not in the photo.)

"We will subsist on distilled water with one tablespoon of honey and one tablespoon of juice per gallon," Mary Emeny, one of the fasters, explained to the press. The fast ended November 9.

On the fast's 10th day, the San Antonio Express carried a little feature story headed "Antiwar Fast Spices Breakfast" and saying: "Republican candidates, leaders and rank-and-filers attending the Tuesday breakfast featuring Mrs. Anne Armstrong (co-chairing the National Republican Committee) at the Cos House were greeted by the San Antonio 'Fast of Life.' The Fast of Lifers were carrying signs and handed out literature explaining they are on a fast because they are outraged by the policies and actions of Nixon's administration in connection with the war in Indochina."

COMPLICITY (cont.)

ance systems, anti-personnel bombs and other hardware for the air war, as well as well-known consumer products such as temperature regulators and photographic equipment. Other targets have been General Electric and Standard Oil.

Last spring, WRL joined with Women Strike for Peace and other groups in developing a campaign against International Telephone and Telegraph, characterized by one of its executives as "The backbone of the Air Force in Southeast Asia." The AFSC in Cambridge, Mass. has made ACC work a major part of its peace program, and already has sponsored several well attended regional conferences to plan strategy and tactics. Natonal Action Research on the Military Industrial Complex (NARMIC) concentrates on producing ACC educational materials and its slide shows, of which over a thousand have been distributed, have been one of the outstanding contributions this past year to the anti-Indochina War movement. Project Air War, the Indochina Research Center and North American Committee on Latin America (NACLA) also produce excellent ACC materials, particularly pamphlets and fliers.

At WRL's recent national conference near Hiram, Ohio, an ACC workshop drew considerable participation and interest. Some of the workshop participants believed that WRL should increase ACC work, making it a regular part of its program. One suggestion was that WRL might concentrate on IBM whose computers and electronics components are essential to the military. Since large, military-related corporations have branches and factories all over the country and the world, such a program would fit in well with WRL's decentralized character and its international affiliation with War Resisters International.

Aside from the Hiram workshop, we have no indication of WRLers' interest in an ACC program, nor of the best specific targets upon which to concentrate. So, we are asking you to send in your ideas and suggestions on the subject.

AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

Even before the election returns were in, Orlie Pell, longtime WRLer of Flemington, New Jersey sat down and wrote us a note: "Peace groups probably will suffer a slump right after the election. I hope this *extra* check will help!"

The check is for $100.

'nuff said.

AT 8th ANNIVERSARY . . .

Photo by Jim Peck

. . . of the Times Square Peace Vigil September 30 were Frances Fitzgerald, author of the enthusiastically reviewed book on Vietnam, "Fire in the Lake"; Otto Nathan, one of the vigil's initiators; and—not shown in this photo—some 20 other participants including six who have rarely missed a Saturday since the vigil started back in 1964.

WRITE FOR WRL *NEWS!*

NEWS ITEMS: Whenever there is a peace happening in your community, write a brief story and send it in to WRL NEWS. If you don't have time, mail us the clipping from your local newspaper—though this is clearly second-best to an original story.

PHOTOS: Whenever possible, accompany the news item with a photo. It need *not* be professional; a box-camera photo will do.

ARTICLES: Each issue of WRL NEWS carries interpretive articles of up to 1300 words on various aspects of the peace problem. We would like more articles from our readers. They need not be as long as 1300 words—that's just the maximum for our limited space requirement.

(The above notice is at the suggestion of the national conference.)

DONALD GROOM DEAD

Donald Groom, associate of Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave, and a lifelong activist in the peace movement, was killed August 11 in an airplane crash between Bhopal and Delhi. Donald was visiting friends in India. Earlier in the summer he had participated in the WRI's triennial conference.

WIN "LOITERING" CASE

A "loitering" case involving 37 persons arrested for vigiling June 10 at the gate of Earle Naval Ammunition Depot, Leonardo, N.J., was dismissed Sept. 29 when Monmouth County Appeals Judge Thomas Yaccarino reversed the lower court's conviction.

Judge Yaccarino held that the vigilers were within their constitutional rights unless the state could prove that the "loitering" had caused obstruction of traffic—and the mere fact that passing cars may have slowed down to observe what was going on, could not be considered obstruction. He challenged the prosecutor to cite a single instance in which the demonstrators actually stepped out into the road and obstructed traffic. When the prosecutor was unable to do so, the judge dismissed the case.

This means that the vigilers (except those not present in court for the appeal) will get back the $85 fine-and-costs which they had paid. Five who refused to pay the fine had served 15 days in jail for contempt. The successful appeal was handled by Peter Buxbaum, representing the New Jersey Civil Liberties Union.

The June 10 demonstration was in conjunction with the People's Blockade against loading of munitions for Vietnam at the Naval depot. The campaign included a water blockade with canoes and a land blockade with sitdowns on railroad tracks leading into the depot. In fact, the vigilers arrested June 10 had been planning to participate in a protest action on the tracks the following day. The vigilers included WRL executive committee members Igal Roodenko, Bertha Faust, Wendy Schwartz and Bradford Lyttle—and your editor.

ENROLLMENT BLANK

Send to War Resisters League
339 Lafayette Street, N. Y., N.Y. 10012

WAR IS A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY.
I THEREFORE AM DETERMINED NOT TO SUPPORT ANY KIND OF WAR, INTERNATIONAL OR CIVIL, AND TO STRIVE FOR THE REMOVAL OF ALL THE CAUSES OF WAR

signature

address

city

state *zip code*

RE-DISCOVERING VIETNAMESE PACIFISM

by Jim Forest

The erosion of hope in the universal applicability of nonviolence is, to say the least, understandable. The heroism and courage of the violent resisters in Vietnam puts all of us to shame. But our identification with those in Vietnam who have (David-like) countered the Goliath of U.S. violence with their own very effective counter-violence has, apparently, starved us of much sight of those in Vietnam who have, no less courageously, refused to struggle with violent means. In an enormous irony, even we pacifists have tended not to be aware of, or to take seriously, our Vietnamese counterparts—just as *we* remain a nearly invisible curiosity to the supposedly "realistic" people of our own society.

But there is a difference. It comes as a surprise to us. Our own pacifist community is pathetically small. I doubt there are 10,000 seriously committed pacifists in the United States: people working with water-like determination to create a just, nonviolent nation and world community and who have absolutely put aside lethal or fear-oriented methodologies to accomplish that end. Whereas in Vietnam there are at *least* that number of pacifists *in prison*. (There are 260 in U.S. prisons for disturbing the war in various ways; there are an estimated 200,000 in Vietnamese prisons for anti-war or anti-Saigon reasons, a large portion for draft resistance or the harboring and encouraging of draft resisters. How many would define themselves as completely opposed to politically-motivated killing has to be guessed at, but Vietnamese pacifists in exile say that 10,000 would be an extremely conservative estimate of the number of their imprisoned co-workers.)

The reasons and vocabularies of explanation vary. For some it is simply religious. They are committed Buddhists and, like growing numbers in other religious traditions, see no sanction for violence in their tradition's way; the Buddha's rejection of violence is, if anything, even clearer and more unambiguous than that of Jesus. Perhaps for a larger number, the dominant reason is a slowly acquired hatred of violence per se.

It was the latter view I was made conscious of in conversations with Cao Ngoc Phuong when in Europe this summer in connection with the WRI conference. I had first arrived in Paris and ended up receiving hospitality from one of the staff members of the Vietnamese Buddhist Peace Delegation.

Cao Ngoc Phuong is a professor of botany from the Universities of Hue and Saigon; for her own highly visible role in the peace movement in those cities, she has been in prison and, subsequently, lived in the underground until it was deemed useful for her to join the delegation staff in Paris, at which point she was smuggled out of her homeland.

She told me, "I am not a pacifist. There is still too much violence and anger in me for me to say that. But I hope to become one someday. All I can say now is that I have seen too much suffering, too much violence, too much killing. I cannot be a part of that. So I try to be with the ones who are pacifist."

One of her close friends was Nhat Chi Mai, the young nun who burned herself as a peace gesture five years ago; the only set of Nhat Chi Mai's explanatory letters that weren't confiscated by Saigon police was the set addressed to Phuong; it was the set which, in various translations, reached the Vietnamese and others throughout the world. Now the anniversary of Nhat Chi Mai's witness is observed by tens of thousands of Vietnamese each year, and is a date that may yet become meaningful to people in other countries.

The encounter with Vietnamese pacifists in Paris was the re-opening of an old, dormant awareness. I had traveled back and forth across the U.S. several times with Thich Nhat Hanh on speaking trips, in 1967 and '68. He is one of Vietnam's most respected poets, a Buddhist leader, a linguist, a university founder, a scholar of Buddhism and of comparative religion; his writings—especially those things that are overtly pacifist—have been outlawed by the Saigon government and subjected to severe criticism from the NLF, Radio Hanoi and Radio Peking. Had it not been for the awareness and experience of him and a movement of similar values in Vietnam, it is possible I never would have had the nerve or backbone to become a resister or face the dislocation of prison.

But the experience had gotten lost in a scrapbook; it had no continuous vitality. I was Thich Nhat Hanh's guest in Paris (he heads the delegation) primarily because I needed a place to stay. I wasn't conscious of being starved for news from Vietnam. It hadn't occurred to me things were happening of a nonviolent nature there that wasn't adequately reported in the U.S., at least in the movement press.

I was so surprised to discover how much I didn't know that I ended up staying much longer than planned in Europe in order to live and work with them, not going anywhere else except Sheffield for the WRI conference, to which Phuong came too, and Laura Hassler, the delegation's one non-Vietnamese member

What was most saddening, in the experience of the stay with the delegation, was the concrete awareness it caused of the ways in which the world peace movement has not only paid scant attention to nonviolent efforts within Vietnam, but has very often excluded such Vietnamese from international meetings, from the "peace" press, or even from participation at various domestic anti-war gatherings. (Thich Nhat Hanh was not allowed to speak at a 1971 rally in Washington, a coalition leader explained to him, because his "politics were unacceptable.")

The Buddhists' Position

What has been so troubling about the Vietnamese pacifists is probably two-fold. They have refused to justify violence, including revolutionary violence, as a means of solving Vietnam's problems; some parts of the PRG, as the NLF before, consider that counter-revolutionary, a position shared by many PRG-allies in other countries. But they have also given a cease-fire their first emphasis, saying that the most pressing need of the people is to stop the killing. They too have pressed for complete U.S. withdrawal, coalition government and other priorities of the PRG. But their emphasis on cease-fire—because it could be exploited by Nixon and Thieu—has caused some to charge them with being CIA fronts. (Of course American pacifists would be similarly charged by many in the U.S. left, were nonviolence not seen as the best tactic in the domestic political environment. Because pacifists never find it politically expedient for others to die.)

The Vietnamese pacifists, who are very largely Buddhist and form a majority in the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, are strikingly like the U.S. Catholic Worker, by the way. They too are involved both in hospitality and resistance. Buddhist centers are providing shelter for more than 300,000 refugees—many of whom have survived not only B-52 bombing raids but shell fire from both Saigon and PGR troops There are occasional reports of monks and nuns, in their ceremonial saffron robes, forming corridors with their bodies between Saigon and PGR troops, allowing peasants to escape from the fire zones while risking their own lives. But there is that other zone of response as well, largely draft resistance and efforts to serve as a buffer

PRISONERS FOR PEACE–1972

It has become a traditional act of solidarity to send holiday cards with deep gratitude. However, in recent years, other cards with deep gratitude. However, in recent years, some prisoners have felt that receiving a large batch of cards is an embarrassment to them and to the other prisoners who receive virtually none. Obviously the problem cannot be solved either by adopting a blanket policy of continuing to send the cards or of ceasing to send the cards. It has to remain a matter of individual choice—your choice.

Federal Women's Prison, Alderson, W .Va. 24901
Pat Grumbles

Federal Prison, Allenwood, Pa. 17810
Guy Gillette Bill Yates, Chuck Klimek, Wayne Lauser, John Sweeney, Tim Kendall, Irv Oslin, Mike McClaverty, Russell Hayes, Gary Becon, Steve Camara, Samuel Crutchfield, Michael Madden, Roy Lisker

Federal Prison, Ashland, Ky. 41101
Robert Wright, Eugene Hayes, Lee Howard, Palmer Singleton, Bob Gross, Steve Harris, John Thompson, Phil Miller, Wayne Johnson, Carl Gravitt, Tom Dally, Dan Geren, Roy Meyers, Bob Dewalt, Thomas Potter, Lawrence Knight

Federal Prison, Danbury, Conn. 06810
Peter Caprotti, Philip Berrigan, Dan Sanders, Kevin Jones, Glen Pontier

Federal Prison, El Reno, Okla. 73036
Robert Yaple, Walt Frieze

Federal Prison, Englewood, Co. 80110
Pete Simmons, Richard Jay Gannett, Dan A. Harris, John Mower, Bill Caldis, Steve Faust, Dennis Koehn, Dan Lager, Carvel Lindteigen, Lonnie Sund, Gregg Eyestone, Terry Smith

Federal Prison, Lewisburg, Pa. 17837
Kenneth Keys, Charles Muse, Wesley Brown, Steve Horn

Federal Prison, Lompoc, Calif. 93436
John William, Scott Paterson, Frederick Best, Kent Davis, Bill Schultz, William O'Connor, James Wheeler, Lewis Coffey, Joseph Sowul, Roderick Woods, Gary Black, Michael Johnson Jack O'Neal, John Sumrall, Jon Adams, Bernard Bender, Joseph Bivens, Donald Brader, Ron Dujanovic, Michael Granger, Terry Kelly, David Williamson, John Delles, Dirk McGrief, Larry Gambill, Raymond Rocha, Richard Ball, Dennis Gromm, Gene Wilson, Gary Jack

Federal Prison, McNeil Island, Steilacoom, Wash. 98388
Mike Schraeder

Federal Prison, Milan, Mich. 48160
Don Pratt, Tom Alderman, Bill Tilton, Tim Tarter, Matt Hoffman, John Flory, Louis Schakel, Jim Rada, Kirk Fjeldman, Bill Viano

Federal Prison, Petersburg, Va. 23883
Paul McNamara, Robert Reese, Bill Suttles, Kaspar Alexander El, Butch Cogdell, Lee Jones, John Fair, Randall Fletcher Wayne Affeldt, Tom Barefoot, Robert Bush, Max Scott, Bill Eagles, Larry C. Vann, Dan Burkholder, Bill Eason, Willie Bryant, Bruce Grumbles, Terry King, Shelton Sharpe, Stanley Clark, Clifford Foreman, John Miller, John Suhre

Federal Prison, Safford, Ariz. 85546
Steve Davidson, Paul Gibson, Howard Wolf, Larry Olson, Randall Sean Kilty, Norman Lewis, Mark Roy, Ken Capozzo, Eric Hedges, Bruce Neckels, James Nobile, Thomas O'Brien, John Tullin, Fred Noldon, Steve Simon, Bob Steel, Bryan Umeki, Rodney Roose, Steve Longo, John Haggerty, Doug Hill, Clinton Noble, William Frank Swindle, Gary Tigerman, Doug Wilson, John Wakula, Gene Sheppard, Mike McEhroen

Federal Prison, Sandstone, Minn. 55072
Fred Chase, John C. Martin, Chuck Turchick, William Bork, Jr., Lynn Hall, David Pence, Brad Beneke, Dave Gutknecht, Frank Kronke, Michael Murdock, Mike Terriault, Alfred E. McGee, Jeff Johnson, John Honkal, Bob Morgan, Michael Conner, Frank Jewell, David Marconett

Federal Prison, Seagoville, Tex. 75159
Alan Sconzert, Terry Blythe, James Dombrouski, Jimmy Rutland, Marvin S. X. Wilson, Jack Espey, William Zaun

Federal Prison, Springfield, Mo. 65805
Tom Nicholson, Donald Olson, Alan Jones, Mark Gilbert, Tommy Holme, Paul Tungseth, Clark Allen Roberts, Bob Doyscher, William Johnson, Richard Murphy, Joe Krejce, Jim Sharp, Doug Skogsberg, Ira Walker

Federal Prison, Tallahassee, Fla. 32302
Larry Lupo, Joseph L. Fisher, Fulton Clark, Michael Diehl, George Holman, James Schworob, Fred Ingram, Ted Irvine, Charles R. Muncaster, Ernest Gardner, Lamar Fisher

Federal Prison, Terminal Island, San Pedro, Calif. 90731
John J. Philips

Federal Prison, Terre Haute, Ind. 47808
Les Bayless, Nicholas Riddell, Arthur Burghardt Banks

Federal Prison, Texarkana, Tex. 75501
Mosel Nealy

Disciplinary Barracks, Dr .A. Ft. Leavenworth, Kans. 66027
Dave Locklin, George Ince, William Boulaise, Mike Crampton, Barry Flanagan, Terry Unrue

Stockade, Ft. Lewis, Tacoma, Wash. 98433
Jon Leppa

Brig, Naval Base, Philadelphia, Pa. 19112
Ben Barr

VIETNAMESE PACIFISM *(cont.)*

community between the warring parties—a thankless task, very often, but one of obvious future importance.

It would seem important for us—whatever comes of current negotiations and agreements—to become much more aware of these friends than we have been. Hopefully a number of WRL members and groups will explore ways to be of some concrete support to the refugee and reconstruction work, with funds and, later on one hopes, with a few volunteers. Contributions, requests for the newsletter, or questions can be sent to: The Vietnamese Buddhist Peace Delegation, 11 rue de la Goutte d'Or, Paris 18, France.

There is also a booklet, with drawings, available from the newly founded Hoa Binh Press, c/o Quaker Project, 13 East 17 Street, New York, N.Y. 10003. The first booklet, an introduction to the Paris peace delegation and the Vietnamese they represent, is entitled "Only the Rice Loves You." It's free for those without money, but contributions are needed. Coming next from the press (whose Vietnamese name means peace) is a poem-play by Thich Nhat Hanh, "The Path of Return Continues the Journey," with a foreword by Daniel Berrigan and with drawings by Vo-Dinh. The probable cost to the press of each copy will be about a dollar.

CREATIVE DISOBEDIENCE

by Francine du Plessix Gray

(an outstanding article reprinted from the *New York Times)*

Some weeks ago, when I was briefly jailed during an anti-war demonstration, I noticed this graffiti on a wall of my prison cell:

What do we want? Freedom!

What do we get? Bologna sandwiches.

The graffiti were fading, barely legible. The Washington, D.C., jail in which it had been scribbled had been exclusively assigned to political demonstrators for some eight years. As I tried to bite into an icy bologna sandwich, which, the guard admitted, had been frozen from the Mayday demonstrations of the previous year, it struck me that thousands of Americans protesting racism or war must have stared at the same graffiti as they sat through the tedious prison night.

I sensed the ending of a tumultuous decade that had been swept by more waves of dissidence than any in our history. And I worried about the decade of the seventies, which, in the political and psychological sense, would be inaugurated on Jan. 20, 1973. Would it bring a period of activism or of apathy? Would Americans continue to take to the streets to air their protests, in a tradition that was renewed in the great civil-rights marches of the early nineteen-sixties? Or would we witness a reversion to the acquiescent complacent climate of the nineteen-fifties?

The latter alternative filled me with anguish. And I feared it as a distinct possibility because of our increasing failure to draw clear distinctions between various movements of dissent. For one of the psychological triumphs of the present Administration has been its ability to obscure all accurate discrimination between violent destructiveness and the kind of pacific sit-in I had engaged in; between the apocalyptic vandalism of small anarchic groups and the creative nonviolence of large and peaceful demonstrations; between incendiary sabotage and acts of civil disobedience as American as apple pie and the Boston Tea Party. Acts which aimed to ask one crucial question: What is true law, what is true order?

"To Assert the Existence of Higher Laws"

This question has been asked by agitators as varied as the prophets Jeremiah and Jesus Christ, the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, and the pioneers of the trade-union movement. For the concept of nonviolent civil disobedience traditional to our Judeo-Christian heritage has always been based on the concept that the citizen can break small laws—indeed, at times must break small laws—to assert the existence of higher laws.

Just as many thousands of Americans, in the nineteenth-century, defied laws forbidding them to shelter runaway slaves, and later defied laws forbidding factory workers to strike, so Americans in the nineteen-sixties defied lunch-counter segregation laws, bus segregation laws, laws against sitting on the steps of Federal buildings, or laws concerning the sanctity of draft files to stress the existence of higher laws such as the brotherhood of man or the atrocity of war. Martin Luther King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for a career in good part based on the defiance of precisely those kinds of small laws, on the defiance of mistaken law and order.

Most of humanity are content to say about social conditions, as St. Augustine did before his conversion, "Oh, save me God, but not quite yet." There is a level of impatience in such activists as Dr. King, which is not shared by the average citizen. For Dr. King and other American dissenters who risked their freedom in the nineteen-sixties—A. J. Muste, Cesar Chavez, Father James Groppi, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Daniel Ellsberg, and the thousands of young men who chose to go to jail rather than fight in Southeast Asia—there was no time to say "but not quite yet." Will the decade of the nineteen-seventies continue to provide us with protesters of equal courage and impatience?

No country is better equipped to understand protest than the United States. We have a richer tradition of civil disobedience than most other nations, and yet we seem to suffer from a willful amnesia about our rebellious past.

"(Not) Without Taking to the Streets"

As I made my belated gesture in that D.C. jail cell, I felt it crucially important to remember—particularly in an election year—that the electoral system has never been the final panacea in this country; that few grave ills have ever been settled here without taking to the streets, be it for the abolition of slavery, for women's suffrage, or for the improvement of factory workers' wages. At any time, the electoral system tends to hand out no more than bologna sandwiches. The task of achieving human freedom will always demand the additional dimension of massive agitation and of sacrifice of freedom, and involves not Congressional enactments but the mystical long haul of history.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said that to be an American is not a nationality but a moral condition. It is in part the profound religiosity of the American spirit, the tradition of religious dissent endemic to our origins, that forges our acute moral fiber, both our priggishness and our ferocious tenacity for protesting injustice. To muffle our capacity for moral outrage, to suppress that appetite for reform expressed in the nineteen-sixties, would deprive us of a noble attribute.

I cannot express my hope for a cessation of violence in the nineteen-seventies without voicing, in the same breath, my hope for a heightening of that spirit of nonviolent dissent which has marked the United States in the sixties.

Whether the nation elects a new President in November or reaffirms its trust in the present one, we must preserve that spirit of dissent to protest our international calamities and our national ones as well: The tragic condition of our prisons, the deterioration of our environment, the erosion of our civil liberties and our constitutional rights, the fact that in the wealthiest of nations one out of ten Americans still goes to bed hungry every night.

OUT OF THE COLD, A FIRE

REPORT OF THE WRL FOURTH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

by David McReynolds

Photo by Bradford Lyttle

Let us begin with the cold. Columbus Day is not Labor Day and Camp Hiram, Ohio, is not Miami. The thin-walled cabins with screen fronts are ideal for mid-August but we arrived October 9, more than two cold weeks into autumn, heavy rain having chased our cars all the way from New York. We found the camp drenched, the matresses clammy.

And so we met, in a forest abandoned to autumn, the golden leaves drifting around us. And whatever disagreements we had—and we had many—we all shared in the chill. But we shared something far more than that. Larry Gara, a National Committee member, wrote us the other day to say, "The further the WRL conference recedes in the background the more meaningful it becomes. It was a remarkable experience."

Why? Everyone who was there left feeling a kind of natural high and it can't all be due to the great cooking of Bob McClellan. How does one explain what happened to the 14,400 members and friends who weren't there? Maybe it was because for some of us who have worked for years in the League, as organizers or solid members, it was great to realize how far we have come just in the past decade. Ten years ago we were an office in lower Manhattan with a list of three thousand supporters. But now—we had 97 people present from 19 different states. Not just a little grouping from New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, but something more solid and deeper. One can almost make a poem out of the names of some of the towns and cities represented: Saginaw, Evansville, Poughkeepsie, Oconomowoc, Battle Creek, Morgantown and Austin; Nashville, Barnstable, San Francisco, Old Greenwich, Augusta, Albuquerque, Atlanta, Barberton and Hays. A car load of folks from Georgia, another from Texas. People came from hundreds of miles in all directions to be together. Roy and Ira and Judy flew in from the West Coast.

And even if one is not an organizer, one can understand, perhaps the fellowship of a group in which there were no age boundaries, no "When you've been around as long as some of us" or "You are too old to understand." Most of us were young, and one had to feel a certain joy that an organization reaching its 50th anniversary is so much younger in its membership than in its age. (If that makes sense.) But the veterans were there as well, Igal and Ralph and Larry and Brad, Marge and Prafulla, and all of us shared the knowledge of being part of a common movement, strangely "open at the edges," bringing together Catholics and anarchists, Jews and McGovernites, Quakers and Marxists. And we had found in nonviolence our center and our home, our hope of thrusting toward a future more liberated for all of us. (One of the really exciting sub-discussions was a "men's caucus" organized by Barry, in which more than a dozen men probed what liberation should mean for men as well as for women.)

Ten years ago we dreamed of having a pacifist base in the South, and thanks to the work of Sue and Henry, and now of Don and Judy and Barbara and Jerry and Margie and Tom and Ed and Grace and Craig we have centers of action in Atlanta and Augusta, Georgia, and in Austin and San Antonio, Texas, and in Albuquerque, New Mexico. If we face a problem, it is making sure that this base, established with so great an effort does not fade if the war in Indo china ends, but expands, becomes more solid in the days ahead. Never in the history of the League have we been as strong as now, never more united even in disagreement than at Hiram, Ohio.

The conference heard reports from 26 local groups and special projects and had workshops on Draft Repeal, Prisons and Prisoners' Support, International Programs, Peoples' Blockades, Middle East, Local Organizing, Corporate Complicity, Alternate Institutions, Vietnam War. The results of these workshops will guide the work of the League in the year ahead. The plenary discussions included a heated and inconclusive discussion over the elections, a discussion of how the League might be broadened to bring in more minoritiy groups, non-whites, working people; and a discussion of our role in coalition work. (The conclusion on that point was that we should continue our coalition contacts but concentrate on building the League's program.) There was also discussion on our relationship with other pacifist groups, such as the Movement for a New Society, and the staff has moved ahead to set up a meeting on that.

It is, of course, impossible to summarize here the results of two days of the National Conference and a day-long meeting of the National Committee, but perhaps what will interest most readers is the news that the Spring meeting of the National Committee will be held in Texas and the next annual conference held in San Francisco. People have nearly a year to plan their finances for this, and the exact date should be known within six months. If it was glorious to meet in Hiram, Ohio, where such warmth could be generated in autumn chill, think of the excitement of meeting on the Western edge of the nation, by the surf of the Pacific, in what many consider the most civilized of American cities.

"THANK YOU FOR THE CONFERENCE" . . .

. . . writes Bruce McConnell of St. Louis. "See, people are coming together: from Denver and Morgantown we came doing, not *THE* same thing, but *A* same thing —that's where it is going

"It is not a central organization we need, only interpersonal confrontation.

"Please print this in WRL NEWS."